



Hampton CITY PAGE

Your Tax Dollars at Work



BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE CITY OF HAMPTON ON 1ST & 3RD THURSDAYS

Education, Transportation ... What's Your Issue?

The Virginia General Assembly is back in session. Education, transportation, rehabilitation - everyone has a need, want, and checklist. But how does the average citizen play a role in the process? How does the average citizen understand the process? Who has the time, patience, or money to devote to making changes?

Well, first let's clear up the misconception that these two things are separate. The citizens are part of government. Most of your representatives want to know what you think. They make their decisions based on the ideas they hear from you.

It doesn't have to be that complicated. Did you know there is an 800 number that you can call and voice your opinion on state issues? All you do is dial (800) 889-0229, give the operator your address, opinion, and whether you would like a response from the legislator and then hang up. You don't even need to know who your representatives are - the operators look them up for you by your address. You can even leave an anonymous message.

Besides the 800 number you can contact your representative



by e-mail too. The Virginia General Assembly has a wonderful website that will tell you anything you want to know about your representatives, legislation, and the overall legislative process.

Ok, you know how to do it - now what's your issue? There are so many to choose from ... where should you start?

Within reason, figure out what issues are of concern to you and your family. How about education? Did you know the state owes the city of Hampton \$30 million in state funding for education? That's a lot of money that could be used to help educate our youth.

Caught in traffic too much?

Maybe transportation is your issue. Numbers continue to increase on the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel (up more than 2% from last year at this time).

You don't need to know how to fix the problem, or even all the details, that's not your job. Just let your representative know the issues of concern to you.

If you have extra time you can even track legislation as it moves through the General Assembly. Furthermore, taking a day and watching the state government in action is an enriching experience. Sometimes they are in session until midnight!

If you still aren't sure on what

to think of it all, take a look at Hampton's website (www.hampton.gov) under *What's Hot*. Or take a look at the City's legislative priorities at www.hampton.gov/budget/legislative.htm for some ideas. The City's page will give you a good idea of what services you receive from the city and some funding inadequacies from the state as well as what you can do to help improve them. Remember, government includes the citizen, they don't exist separately. Assume your role as an active citizen and the government will be better for it.

Constituent Viewpoint Hotline:
(800) 889-0229

Hampton's Legislative Priorities:
www.hampton.gov/budget/legislative.htm

Virginia General Assembly:
<http://legis.state.va.us/>

Who's My Legislator:
<http://convview.state.va.us/whosmy/constinput.asp>

Virginia First Cities Coalition:
www.vafirstcities.com

Youth ... A Valuable Hampton Asset

In Hampton, youth are considered assets to their neighborhoods, schools, and city government. Their voices have the power to shape the future of the city they live in and to make Hampton the most livable city in Virginia.

There are many ways that young people can make a difference in Hampton and gain valuable learning experiences along the way. Thousands of youth each year participate in community projects and service learning. From neighborhood clean-ups to anti-violence campaigns, these opportunities allow youth to

become active members within their communities.

Teens can also take advantage of a variety of advisory roles. Youth focus

groups are regularly held to seek youth input in neighborhood and city issues. The Superintendent of Schools and all secondary principals meet with Student Advisory Teams, giving youth a voice in school issues.



Youth in Hampton also have great opportunities to gain leadership experience and to take on decision-

making roles with adults. Each year, young people serve as grant-makers awarding over \$50,000 through the Hampton Youth Commission and Uth ACT. Two teens even work as city planners in the Planning Department.

For more information about youth civic engagement, call the Hampton Coalition for Youth at 728-3280.



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January

COMMUNITY
EVENTS

► **19 Martin Luther King March**
9:00 a.m., Downtown Hampton

► **28 Hampton City Council Meeting**
7:30 p.m., Council Chambers (8th Floor, City Hall). Also telecast on the City channel, TV-47.

30-01 Hampton Roads Home & Garden Expo
Friday, 12:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.,
Saturday, 10:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.,
Sunday, & 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.,
Hampton Coliseum.
For more information or to purchase tickets call 838-5650 or visit the Coliseum box office located inside the Coliseum.

Happy New Year!

News and information in *City Page* shows your tax dollars at work. It combines information from city departments into one place, saves money and is timelier than previous newsletters. *City Page* is brought to you by the Public Communications Division of the City of Hampton

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